

# Assignment TV

By TERRENCE O'FLAHERTY

Recently I had cocktails and dinner with a rich redhead who works harder for her money than any other woman I know, including Lady Bird Johnson.

Her name is Lucille Ball. We ate at her place, which turned out to be the East penthouse of the Hilton Hotel, a spectacular, two-floor apartment which is suspended over New York City like a bright jewel in the sky. Although Miss Ball is a lavishly assembled person I'm she was upstaged by the house which has 11 and as far as I am concerned is the only hotel suite in town that has a guest bedroom and bath.

IT IS DIFFICULT to compete with an architect, an interior decorator, a ten-foot sofa upholstered in "Mandarin orange," a collection of new masters, wall-to-wall rugs, an Adams writing table with Wedgwood medallions, a circular staircase, a Louis XVI sideboard, a three-pedestal Georgian table, four cock-fight chairs, a painted Italian cabinet (which contained a color television set) and an English drum table, circa 1776, which was a very bad year for the British.

Inasmuch as Miss Ball has Wedgwood blue eyes and Mandarin orange hair, she tended to blend into the scenery with alarming frequency, so that I had a difficult time focusing my eyes on the lady. Sometimes she was there, sometimes she wasn't. But that's the way it is with her. You can sit down and talk with Miss Ball and she seems

## Van Deene Class Sets Bank Visit

Sixth grade students in Thomas Jeppson's class at Van Deene Avenue School will visit the Torrance branch of the Bank of America Wednesday, Sept. 30.

The visit is part of a social studies lesson. Bank Manager Bruce Jones and his staff will conduct the youngsters on a tour of the bank, including the vault and safe deposit box area.

Following their return to school, the class will devote a part of the day to a discussion of the trip. The youngsters will then prepare written reports on what they have learned.

The bank tours are arranged annually as part of the schools savings and thrift program, according to Burton M. Oliver, head of the program.

SHE GAVE this party for several hundred of her friends from the press, some of whom turned out to be people I've been avoiding for years. I was talking to the hostess and was ready to ask about several large scratches on her arm when suddenly she wasn't there and a press agent was asking me if I'd like to see Gary's suite. He's Miss Ball's husband.

The bedroom had tobacco brown walls with a ceiling that was described as "light melon" and carpeting of "cornflower blue." The bed was an 18th Century, four-poster that Henry VIII would have appreciated if he hadn't died long before then. A tall Georgian linen press contained a television set. There was a room for everything but his golf clubs. They leaned against an antique chest.

Miss Ball's bedroom had Chinese wall paper in blue, white and apricot. The furniture was described as French, and I was afraid to open any antiques lest a television set fall out.

BACK IN the drawing room, Miss Ball was receiving some advice from Hedda Hopper, the famous political columnist. The horizon was turning an orange color—Mandarin, I think—and Central Park was a deep green—Mitzi, of course. The sky was a Ben blue and the buildings were Pearl white and Skelton red.

Suddenly Miss Ball was back again. Miss Hopper had disappeared into the hors d'oeuvres. "I got the scratches from wrestling a live bear last week in Hollywood," she said brightly, and anyone who watches the Lucy show knows she was surely telling the truth.

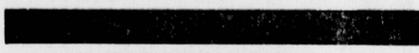
I recalled that the last time I had talked to her was backstage at the Paramount Theater in San Francisco 14 years ago when she was appearing in a stage show with Desi Arnaz. At that time she had some scratches from being carried in an elephant's mouth during a scene for Cecil B. DeMille's "The Greatest Show on Earth." That was the day she said:

"I know you'll think I'm crazy, but I'd like to do a weekly television show. I think it could be filmed before a live audience."

It turned out to be the least crazy statement in the history of television. Sitting there among the Mandarins and the Georgians on the 46th floor, it all seemed to have happened so long, long ago.



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